

2013 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UPTON LAND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE (ULSC)

In 2013 the ULSC continued with the implementation of the Land Stewardship Plan for the Former Stefans Farm Parcel. Wetlands were identified, a wetland mitigation area agreed upon and a Notice of Intent was filed for 13 projects to be undertaken on the property. The first project, a crossing over an intermittent stream, was completed by Upton Scout Ryan Flodstrom as his Eagle Project. An extension into 2014 was granted by the Recreational Trails Program for funding needed to complete much of the work proposed. Invasive plant control by manual labor and herbicide application was undertaken and will continue as long as needed and practical.

A third Recreational Trails Program grant in the amount of \$9,252 was awarded to the ULSC to place signage and interpretive panels at trailheads and along trails on ULSC and Upton Historical Commission managed properties.

Plots at the community garden were once again made available to Upton residents at no cost. The Community Garden Coordinator, Matthew Bachtold co-managed the tasks associated with the garden. Produce from one plot was donated to the United Parish food pantry. A donation of water to use at the garden came from Milford Hospital thanks to coordination by Selectman, Ken Picard.

A Notice of Intent encompassing work to be done at eight different sites at the Whitney Conservation Area West (WCAW) was filed and the first of these projects completed was a boardwalk built over a section of wetland. Abutter Richard Howarth assisted by bringing materials to the site and a crew of volunteers including Boy Scouts from Upton Troop 132, AmeriCorps workers, and LSC members built it in one day.

The Whitney Conservation Area trails are open and connect to trails at the Upton State Forest, and the Warren Brook Conservation Area. The parking lot accessing these trails is also open and improvements included excavation, gravel fill, the placement of drainage pipes, and installation of boulders to delineate the parking area. Gravel for the project was donated by Jim Pyne of Hopkinton. Assistance was also given by George Patterson who helped move stones to otherwise make the area passable until work to fully develop the lot could begin.

An access trail to the Goss Pond property off Green Lane was established and additional improvements to the trail system, are planned for 2014. Comments of abutters were taken into consideration and the trail will be developed to address their concerns, while still providing public access to the Goss Pond parcel.

Existing trails have been maintained on properties throughout Upton. At the Warren Brook Watershed Conservation Area (WBWCA) a trail which was found to

be, in part, on private land was re-routed to stay within the boundaries of town land. A stream crossing (boardwalk) was constructed to improve access to the Howarth Glen Conservation Area. Volunteer Land Stewards, Cindy and Dennis Maher, are helping to develop and maintain trails and monitor the WBWCA.

Girl Scouts Olivia Desmond, Sarah Hetu and Rebecca Pfeiffer of Upton Troop 30203 painted and installed trail signs at the Whitney and Richard & Naomi Howarth Conservation Areas as their Silver Award Project.

Milford Cub Scout Pack 67 did their annual clean up at the Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area. This year there was less litter to pick up which suggests that the public is taking better care of the property.

Two documents, the *Land Stewardship Handbook* and the *Eagle Project Checklist*, are nearly complete. These will serve as guideline documents to help with work done on ULSC managed properties.

Hours contributed by the Boy Scouts, Bay State Trail Riders Association, other volunteers and committee members added up to 632 work hours (valued at \$17,336) to develop trails and the community garden, map trail networks, engage in negotiations, grant writing and administrative work.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Bachtold-Community Garden Coordinator

Scott Heim

Mary Overholt

Mike Penko-Secretary

Marcella Stasa-Chairperson

Cathy Taylor

William Taylor